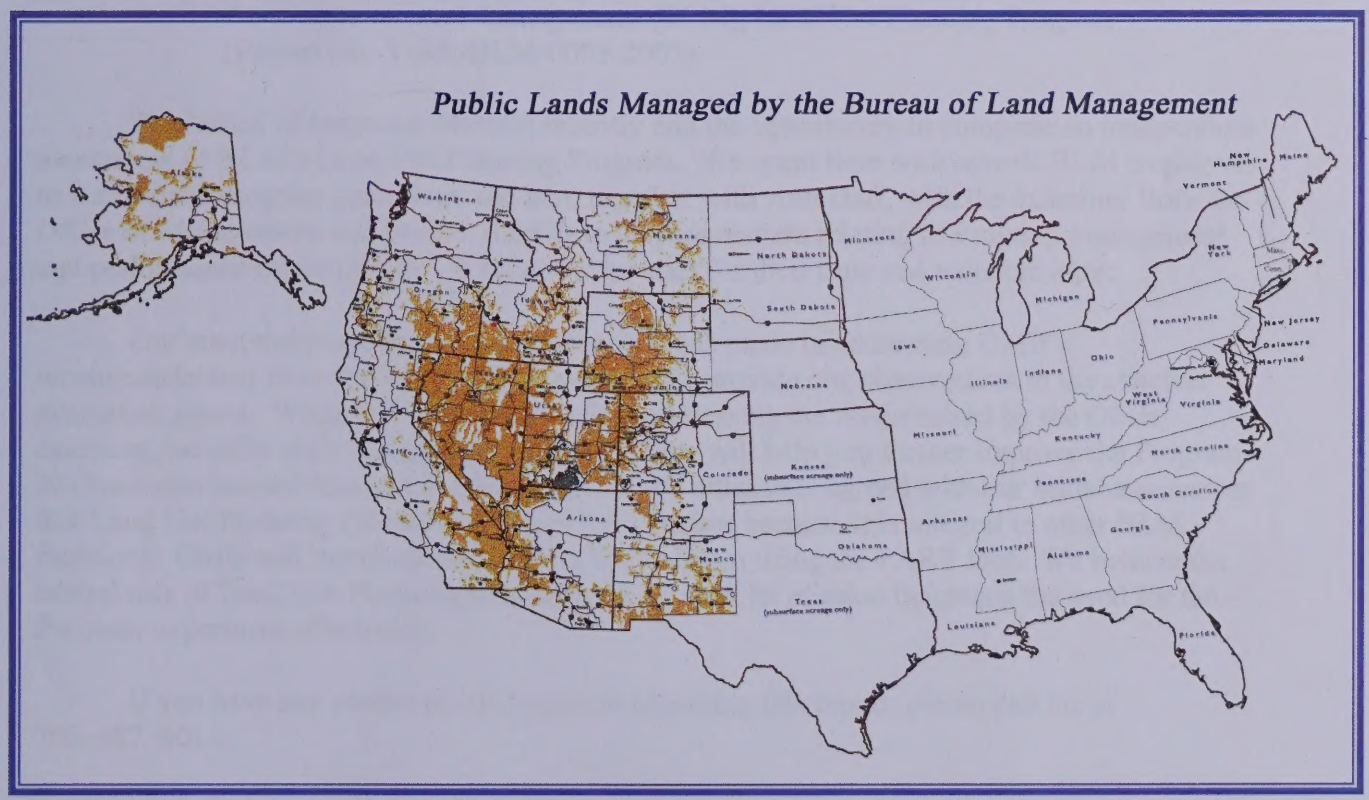
ID: 88076812

Box 2
Item 2-29

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT RATING TOOL
PROGRESS EVALUATION

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
LAND USE PLANNING PROGRAM



Y-RR-BLM-0005-2007

FEBRUARY 2008

United States Department of the Interior

Office of Inspector General

Office of Inspections and Evaluations
381 Elden Street, Suite 1100
Herndon, Virginia 20170

FEB 25 2008

Memorandum

To: Jim Caswell
Director, Bureau of Land Management

From: Donald W. Cairns
Director, Program Analysis and Technical Support

Subject: Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) — Progress Evaluation of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Land Use Planning Program (Report No. Y-RR-BLM-0005-2007)

The Office of Inspector General recently had the opportunity to complete an independent assessment of BLM's Land Use Planning Program. We spent time with several BLM employees to learn about Program operations and met, together with your staff, with the examiner from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to discuss matters relating to Program management and performance measurement. We thank your staff for their time and valuable input.

Our team evaluated the progress your staff has made in addressing OMB's recommendations from the 2005 PART review. We provide our observations in the attached evaluation report. While the Program overall is addressing the issues raised by the OMB examiner, we offer eight suggestions that we believe will help you further improve the Program. We have also learned that late in the process, OMB ultimately agreed with our initial assessment that Land Use Planning did not warrant a PART review because it is integral to other BLM functions. OMB will therefore not reassess the Program using the PART tool. We believe the central role of Land Use Planning in helping BLM meet its mission heightens the need for the Program to perform effectively.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this report, please call me at 703–487–8011.

cc: Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
LAND USE PLANNING

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ON THE COVER

Map of public lands managed by the BLM. Yellow areas indicate BLM managed lands in the western United States. In the eastern United States, the BLM manages 39.7 million acres of subsurface mineral estate and 30,000 acres of surface, mostly small isolated parcels scattered throughout 31 States.
Source: BLM.

ACRONYMS

AIM	Assessment Inventory and Management
AMS	Analysis of Management Situation
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
DOI	Department of Interior
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOA	Notice of Availability
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
PART	Program Assessment Rating Tool
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RND	Results Not Demonstrated

INTRODUCTION

WHY WE DID THIS PROGRESS EVALUATION

The Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI) asked the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to evaluate the progress made by programs designated **Results Not Demonstrated** (RND). OMB uses the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) to make these designations.

In discussions with officials in the DOI Office of Budget and the DOI Office of Planning and Performance Management, we considered each DOI program in RND status and a number of factors, such as each program's budget and how long each program has been in the **Results Not Demonstrated** category. We selected the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Land Use Planning Program (referred to as the Program) for this progress evaluation.

The Land Use Planning Program is administered through BLM's Division of Planning and Science Policy. See Appendix B for a simplified table of organization.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

OMB reviewed the Program in 2005 and recommended that BLM officials develop new performance measures, as well as an agency-wide monitoring strategy. Our objectives were to determine the Program's progress toward implementing these two recommendations and to provide suggestions that Program officials could use in improving the Program.

To meet these objectives, we interviewed Bureau officials, Department officials, and the OMB examiner responsible for assessing BLM programs. We reviewed and analyzed Program documentation, reviewed performance measurement and program evaluation literature, and reviewed applicable laws governing land use, land use planning, and environmental policy. Also, we attended a briefing by officials from BLM's Arizona State Office on their Resource Management Plan (RMP) implementation and budget strategy pilot program. We conducted our evaluation in accordance with the "Quality Standards for Inspections" established by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency and we based the suggestions presented in this report on OMB's 2007 PART guidance.

WHAT IS THE PART?

Federal agencies use the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), a standard questionnaire, to submit information on federal programs to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB examiners assess programs based on responses to YES/NO questions in the areas of program purpose and design, strategic planning, program management, and — most importantly — program results.

OMB uses the information to determine program effectiveness, to recommend improvements for rated programs, and to follow up on those improvements.

The ExpectMore.gov Web site publishes PART results. See Appendix A for more information on the history and use of the PART.

OVERVIEW: BLM'S LAND USE PLANNING PROGRAM

The Bureau of Land Management's mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. BLM manages more than 250 million surface acres of public lands and 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate. These lands contain a myriad of resources and provide for a variety of the Nation's needs, including outdoor recreation, domestic energy production, wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, timber, and other natural, cultural, and historical resources.

BLM Logo

Activities managed or permitted by BLM are important sources of revenue for the U.S. Treasury. For example, royalties collected from energy leasing, fees collected for the issuance of grazing permits, and the proceeds from the sale of timber all serve to benefit the taxpayer. In 2008, public lands are projected to generate an estimated $4.5 billion in revenues, mostly from energy development.

WHAT IS FLPMA?

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires a systematic approach to land use planning which considers present and potential uses of public lands based on principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

WHAT IS NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) establishes a public, interdisciplinary framework for Federal decision-making to ensure that all agencies consider environmental factors when planning or proposing Federal actions.

According to BLM officials, rapid population growth in the West has resulted in increased, and sometimes competing, demands for public land resources. BLM utilizes a complex land use planning process to address competing demands for use of public lands, and to maintain an appropriate balance between land use and resource protection. Through the planning process, BLM officials work to ensure that public lands are managed in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The result of the process is a set of land use plans, referred to as resource management plans (RMPs), which guide decisions for every action and approved use on public lands.

RMP development and implementation, and monitoring of RMP effectiveness, are largely decentralized activities. Although most planning activities occur at the field level, individuals throughout the organization are involved, as reflected in Table 1. BLM field managers utilize RMPs and develop RMP implementation strategies to establish and follow through on specific land management decisions and practices needed to achieve desired resource conditions and land use goals in keeping with BLM's mission and the DOI Strategic Plan. BLM's Washington Planning Office provides the field with technical support and policy guidance.

Espousing an adaptive management philosophy, BLM officials work to ensure that RMPs and management practices continue to address current environmental concerns and meet the changing demands for use of public lands. Since the decisions reflected in RMPs typically apply to a particular area for an indeterminate period, RMPs are periodically amended to respond to concerns of neighboring jurisdictions or other stakeholders, or as new requirements are necessitated by legislation, court decrees, or changes in local environmental conditions. See Appendix C for an outline of the required steps for RMP revisions and amendments.

If BLM State offices and field managers are not able to keep RMPs updated through minor amendments, a major revision may be required. BLM's goal is to complete each major revision or new RMP within 4 years. During the 2001-2004 timeframe, BLM had initiated as many as 20 new RMPs in a given year. This resulted in extended timelines as attention and resources were spread over as many as 80 plans in process.

To address this dilemma, BLM did not start any new major efforts in 2005, and since 2006 has taken a more measured approach to the number of plans that can realistically be completed. BLM officials now plan to initiate approximately

Table 1. Planning Roles and Responsibilities

Core Planning Participants	Plan Support and Approval
Field Office Manager • Oversees planning projects • Recommends State Director approval	**Washington Office** • Ensures plan compliance with national policy • Promotes consistency across planning areas • Approves *Federal Register* notices • Allocates funding for plans • Resolves protests
Planning Team Lead • Oversees work on plan • Assembles interdisciplinary team • Encourages stakeholder involvement • Point of contact between core planning participants and State Office	
Interdisciplinary Team (BLM) • Writes sections of plan • Ensures stakeholder participation	**State Office** • Ensures quality control • Director approves • Point of contact between Washington Office and Planning Team Lead
Resource Advisory Council • Provides recommendations to local field managers	
Other Non-BLM Plan Participants • Supply information • Attend meetings • Review drafts	**Governor** • Reviews plan for consistency

Source: BLM

7 to 10 new RMPs or major revisions per year. Additionally, some planning areas are being consolidated, reducing the total number of required RMPs from approximately 160 a few years ago to about 143 currently. Of these, officials tell us that approximately 40 revisions have been completed since 2001; 60 are ongoing, and approximately 43 have yet to be initiated.

Table 2. Budget Summary ($ in millions)

Program	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008			Net Change from FY2007
			Fixed Cost Changes	Program Changes	Budget Request	
Resource Management Planning	$49,527	$49,142	+$1,176	-$3,247	$47,071	-$2,071

Source: BLM 2008 Budget Justifications

The Bureau's Resource Protection and Maintenance budget activity funds BLM's land use planning and related compliance processes. As reflected in Table 2, the FY2008 budget request for resource management planning is $47,071,000. Program changes include a decrease of $111,000 in the streamlining of applied sciences and publishing services; a decrease of $136,000 in travel expenses; and a $3 million program decrease that would have the effect of bringing an earlier projection of 14 RMP projects down to 9.

OMB's 2005 PART Assessment

The results of the 2005 OMB PART assessment indicated that the Program has not been able to develop acceptable performance goals or to collect data that demonstrated whether the Program was performing effectively. BLM was unable to satisfy OMB requirements for 12 PART questions, listed in Appendix D. All but two relate to performance measurement. In summary, OMB observed the following:

- The program has a clear mission and goals, but lacks good measures tied to those goals.
- Regular monitoring is critical to ensuring that the agency is achieving its long-term land use plan goals.
- The Bureau often needs better data.

Based on these findings, OMB recommended an improvement plan for the Program that included the following two actions:

- Develop new performance measures to assess the timeliness and implementation of land use plans; and
- Develop an agency-wide monitoring strategy to identify data gaps and coordinate the collection and reporting of key performance data. (The Bureau's planning program is a key partner in this effort.)

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

We evaluated the Program in 2007 as a follow-up to the 2005 OMB PART review and have observed progress toward implementing the actions requested in OMB's improvement plan. Early in our evaluation, we suggested to the OMB examiner that the scope of the Program was not appropriate for a distinct PART score and rating. We based this suggestion on our observation that environmental analyses and land use planning processes are integral to other programs and sub-activities across BLM, each of which is subject to a separate PART review. In executing other programs such as Resource Management, Recreation Management, and Energy and Minerals Management, BLM managers rely on environmental analysis and land use planning processes to support outcome goals. We concluded that Land Use Planning is not a stand-alone program but rather a shared element spanning many BLM programs. OMB officials initially did not agree with our assessment, so we continued our efforts to provide independent viewpoints and to promote continued dialogue between the Land Use Planning staff and the OMB examiner.

As our evaluation process was nearing its conclusion, we learned that OMB officials had reconsidered their position and had come to agree with our initial assessment. They decided that Land Use Planning did not warrant a PART review as a stand-alone Program. We believe the rationale for not reassessing the Program using the PART actually heightens the need to manage the Program effectively — Land Use Planning stands as the foundation for effective management of many other BLM programs and activities. Consideration of our suggestions, presented below, can therefore assist BLM officials in guiding the Program to more effectively support BLM's other mission-critical programs and activities.

PROGRESS ON OMB'S FIRST PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN ACTION:

Develop new performance measures to assess the timeliness and implementation of land use plans.

Prior to our evaluation, Program officials had developed four performance measures and submitted them to OMB for consideration. The OMB examiner accepted an efficiency measure in April 2007. However, by the time we began our evaluation in June 2007, the OMB examiner and Program officials had not reached consensus on the remaining three performance measures. Communication between the two agencies and progress toward development of any new mutually acceptable measures had stalled.

A focus on more outcome oriented measures could help gauge whether the agency is meeting its broader land use plan goals. Better performance measures could also help the program demonstrate sound business practices (such as plans completed on-time and within budget).

Source: ExpectMore.gov

We facilitated meetings between the OMB examiner and BLM personnel to reopen discussion and work toward development of mutually acceptable long-term performance measures. The OMB examiner indicated that the Program's long-term and intermediate performance measures should reflect Program outcomes, not just outputs. In addition, acceptable measures

should demonstrate the effectiveness of the planning function by indicating how the results of RMP implementation influence the next iteration of BLM's planning cycle.

We agreed in principle with the examiner's concerns. To satisfy PART requirements, federal programs need a set of performance measures that includes specific outcomes, outputs, and at least one significant efficiency measure. These performance measures should indicate results broadly, and should generally be supported by more detailed measures within the agency. BLM officials need to consider the following questions when developing new performance measures:

- Can the data be collected in a timely manner?
- Are mechanisms in place to assure accuracy of the data?
- Is there sufficient capacity within the Program to allow for adequate analysis of the data and to report reliable information?
- How will the information be used in the land use planning process?

In October 2007, after a series of discussions, Program officials drafted five new measures. Listed below in Table 3, this new set of measures acknowledges a link between the planning function and the achievement of BLM's long-term outcome goals by using riparian area conditions as a high-level indicator of overall land health. The measures also reflect the need for State office-level implementation strategies; the need for maintenance and evaluation of all RMPs; and the need for effective consultation with neighboring jurisdictions. In supporting documentation provided to the examiner, Program officials have also shown how each measure links to BLM's existing policies and procedures, notably the Bureau's *Land Use Planning Handbook.*

Table 3. New Proposed Land Use Planning Performance Measures

Term	Type	Performance Measures
Long Term	Outcome	Percent of resource management plans evaluated where significant progress is being made toward achieving riparian condition goals
Long Term	Outcome	Percent of resource management plans evaluated that are maintained and/or amended to address changes in demands for the use of the public lands
Long Term	Outcome	Percent of resource management plans evaluated that are maintained and/or amended to address changes in the plans of adjoining jurisdictions
Annual	Output	Percent of resource management plans with an Implementation Strategy
Annual	Output	Percent of resource management plans evaluated within 5 years of the Record of Decision

Note: An annual efficiency measure — "Percent of Resource Management Plans completed within 4 years of start" — was previously submitted by BLM and accepted by OMB in April 2007.

The OMB examiner commended the progress that Program officials have made in developing their performance measures. The parties were still discussing some minor revisions in the wording of the measures or in the underlying definitions when OMB's decision to discontinue the anticipated PART review was communicated to DOI. Even though the Program is no longer viewed as a stand-alone entity for PART purposes, we believe that these measures can still be used — perhaps as supporting measures for other BLM programs subject to PART review, or only for internal Bureau management purposes.

OIG Suggestion 1

BLM officials should continue their work on establishing new performance measures and performance baselines. They should establish ambitious targets, link these targets to managers' performance plans, and document data collection and verification procedures.

In addition to the joint meetings in which we discussed the Program's performance measures, we met with BLM and OMB representatives separately to determine their perspectives on operational aspects of the planning process and the role of BLM's Division of Planning and Science Policy ("Washington Planning Office"). From our discussions, we determined that Program personnel view the Washington Planning Office as fulfilling a facilitative role — a limited area of responsibility centered on the provision of "rules and tools". Although BLM's land use planning activities are referred to as a "Program," BLM does not have a central authority below the Bureau Director that is empowered to direct land use planning efforts. Instead, the current structure is decentralized, with each State office director managing planning activities and serving as the final approving authority for RMPs under their purview.

In contrast, the OMB examiner views the Washington Planning Office as having a more substantial role, central to the work of other BLM sub-activities — such as recreation, grazing, and energy — that participate in the development of individual RMPs. Land use planning serves as the underpinning for BLM's other programs, providing the foundation for the achievement of outcome goals across the Bureau at the national level. From our discussions with the OMB examiner, we have come to believe that she and others in OMB see an overarching role inherent to the planning function — a role that entails the responsibility to oversee and coordinate all land use planning activities.

We believe that this difference of opinion concerning the role of the Washington Planning Office contributed significantly to delaying the development of mutually acceptable performance measures.

OIG Suggestion 2

BLM management should clarify a) the role of the Division of Planning and Science Policy in land use planning and b) the extent of the Division's authority in providing central oversight of the land use planning process.

PROGRESS ON OMB'S SECOND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN ACTION:

Develop an agency-wide monitoring strategy to identify data gaps and coordinate the collection and reporting of key performance data.

OMB expects Program officials to systematically report on RMP implementation as well as the effectiveness of these plans and to use the information derived from their assessment to identify resource allocation priorities and opportunities for improvement. BLM is developing a national assessment, inventory, and monitoring (AIM) strategy to better manage the collection, storage, and use of data for land use planning and management purposes.

> The planning program plays an important role in facilitating monitoring efforts and tracking overall agency progress toward its plan goals.
>
> Improved land health data would allow the agency to properly evaluate whether it is meeting certain land use plan goals.
>
> *Source: ExpectMore.gov*

In support of this initiative, the Bureau has established a monitoring coordinator position and officials are working to improve data collection processes that support the ability to assess the overall health of public lands. They have conducted planning sessions and working group meetings to draw upon the expertise of personnel within field offices, State offices, and the Washington planning office. An internal review report (currently in draft) recognizes that shortcomings exist in the integration of appropriate data with the Bureau's planning and budgeting processes. The draft report suggests a need for landscape-level monitoring across sub-activities, rather than more restrictive programmatic views. From our review of the draft report, the recommendations offered appear to substantiate OMB's PART results.

At this stage, the AIM strategy seems to be more conceptual than tangible in that there is as yet no single document outlining specific objectives or delineating the means through which such objectives will be achieved. However, we believe that when fully developed and implemented, the strategy should provide the necessary framework for improved management of land health information, enabling Program officials to identify and address information gaps and more effectively communicate resource conditions to their senior leadership. Institutionalizing such a strategy will require long-term commitment, leadership, and significant investment.

OIG Suggestion 3

BLM officials should continue their work in developing a monitoring strategy that provides the information necessary to track progress in implementing resource management plans and to evaluate effectiveness in terms of resource condition outcomes. Their strategy should be detailed cohesively in a document that outlines objectives, priorities, and the means to be employed.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although the lack of acceptable performance measures ultimately triggered OMB's designation of the Program as **Results Not Demonstrated**, we believe Program officials should also address a number of other issues. Specifically, we address partnership efforts, independent evaluation, budget development, managerial performance appraisal, and cost efficiency.

Partnership Efforts

PART Question 2.5
Do all partners … commit to and work toward the annual and/or long-term goals of the program?

The creation of public, private, and interagency partnerships can prove useful — not only in assisting with implementation of RMPs, but also in developing a more informed constituency. Continuing efforts toward working with various BLM partners should enable the Bureau to improve land use planning processes and the resulting RMPs.

Establishment and maintenance of partnerships could afford BLM opportunities to:

- increase communication and collaboration with interested groups;
- leverage base funds with private funding;
- foster a sense of stewardship in the management of public lands; and
- support local communities in community development efforts.

Where appropriate, partnership efforts should be documented with memoranda of agreement, joint publications, or other records so that mutual goals and expectations can be clearly communicated, and respective roles and contributions can be verified.

OIG Suggestion 4

BLM officials should document collaborative efforts in order to better manage the Program's key partnerships.

Independent Evaluation

Evaluations of the Program should be of a sufficient quality, scope, and frequency to provide information on the effectiveness of the entire Program rather than just certain aspects or selected sites. For example, although BLM had contracted with a third party to conduct an evaluation of the contracting process, OMB determined that the scope of this evaluation alone was too narrow to satisfy PART requirements.

BLM officials should keep in mind that the most significant aspect of the Program's effectiveness is its overall impact on the health of public lands. Monitoring land health is critical, as the Bureau's AIM strategy recognizes. However, monitoring outcomes alone will not differentiate the effects of BLM's management actions from what would have occurred in the absence of the Program. Third-party evaluations should be conducted frequently — not only to validate the Program's monitoring efforts, but also to capture information about the Program's impact on targeted outcomes. Independent evaluations can also be used to provide Program officials with information needed to improve operational efficiency.

PART Question 2.6

Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?

PART Question 4.5

Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?

One approach that may be used as part of a broader evaluation strategy may include expanded use of Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) to lend a degree of independence to RMP evaluations. Twenty-five RACs have been established to represent the diverse opinions of various users of public lands in advising BLM on the preparation, amendment, and implementation of land use and resource management plans. If Program officials elect to use RACs as a means to evaluate RMPs, then adequate documentation should be provided to explain the rationale and scope of RAC involvement in evaluative processes.

OIG Suggestion 5

BLM officials should contract with an evaluation professional to work with Resource Advisory Councils in developing an evaluation strategy focused on the Bureau's land use planning and RMP implementation processes.

Budget Development

PART Question 2.7

Are budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishments of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget?

One way the Program is working to improve its resource allocation process is through a pilot project in Arizona. The pilot project is designed to support implementation strategies for RMPs at the field office level, while helping officials at the State office level to make budgetary decisions that support that implementation in alignment with national priorities. The process integrates various considerations into the budget development and allocation process. These considerations include social and environmental changes; themes and priorities established by Department and Bureau management; and field office project timelines and workload estimates.

As part of the pilot project, BLM-Arizona officials developed a database application that compiles 3- to 5-year budget projections. The database helps managers identify priority resource management projects and resolve discrepancies between how work is prioritized in the field and how the BLM budget funds these work priorities. Officials use associated workload analyses to develop plans and establish mutually agreeable priorities between BLM and its partners. Use of this database also helps to integrate priorities from BLM headquarters with work at the field level. The methodology is designed to recognize the effects of capacity constraints and to highlight the need to fund higher priorities, rather than allocating funds based solely on historical trends.

Officials at all levels of the Bureau can view the long-range projections of budget and workload, and shift resources as needed to achieve critical milestones, adjust project deadlines or other milestones as appropriate, or postpone project starts until resources become available. The process allows field offices and headquarters to reach a common understanding of what work needs to be performed, when it will be performed, the consequences of the choices being made, and where backlogs and other issues are likely to occur.

The overarching goal of this pilot program has been unification of workload and fiscal planning data to enable Program officials to better align program priorities and funding. We believe that expansion of the pilot project would improve the Bureau's integration of budgetary processes and performance planning.

OIG Suggestion 6

BLM officials should continue and expand efforts such as the BLM-Arizona pilot project, to align priorities and funding at the national, state, and field levels.

Managerial Performance Appraisal

In the 2005 PART assessment, OMB indicated that performance appraisals for Program managers do not appear to be sufficiently linked to the broader Program goals or performance measures. When new performance measures are in place, BLM should be able to take appropriate actions to link individual performance appraisals to specific land use planning targets. BLM officials will need to link Program performance with personnel performance through the establishment of appropriate appraisal standards and clearly defined performance targets.

PART Question 3.2

Are Federal managers … held accountable for cost, schedule, and performance results?

OIG Suggestion 7

BLM should link new performance measures to managerial performance appraisals.

Cost Efficiency

In 2005, the Program received an automatic "NO" in response to PART questions related to efficiency because officials had not instituted an efficiency measure at the time of the PART review. However, OMB did note that Program officials had made modest progress towards improving efficiency in the areas of wildland fire management decision amendments and "e-Planning".

PART Question 3.4

Does the program have procedures … to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution?

PART Question 4.3

Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?

In support of the President's "E-Gov" initiative, BLM developed the "e-Planning" system, integrating several applications to manage, store, geographically reference, use, and reuse land use planning and NEPA documents. Phase I of the system was initiated in September 2007, and the system should be available to support 7 new planning efforts in 2008.

Though we did not examine e-Planning project management in detail, we believe that continued development and expansion of the e-Planning initiative should not only reduce costs associated with the land use planning process, but also enable increased public access to decision-making and enhanced collaboration with other land management agencies.

OIG Suggestion 8

BLM should continue to develop e-Planning and other cost efficiency initiatives, and document efficiency gains in the process.

SUMMARY

Our evaluation evolved out of BLM's need to demonstrate the impact of its land use planning activities for purposes of the PART, and to institute changes to improve Program performance. During the course of our evaluation, we worked with Program officials and the OMB examiner to discuss the changes needed in the Program's performance measures. The measures needed to be more outcome-oriented, with an emphasis on land health as a means to better assess the effectiveness of the Bureau's planning and resource management processes. The measures also needed to demonstrate a link from planning to implementation, and then to results. We believe the new measures developed by BLM officials should satisfy these requirements. To complete the process, Program officials must now begin to collect data, estimate performance baselines, and establish targets for the future.

Other issues — such as working with partners, achieving cost efficiency, and developing a monitoring strategy — are being addressed by BLM officials. Better documentation could prove helpful in demonstrating the results of these efforts.

Finally, the role of BLM's Division of Planning and Science Policy should be clarified and perhaps further strengthened. Some degree of central oversight of the development, approval, and evaluation of the Bureau's resource management plans could provide greater accountability and could foster further improvement in the planning process.

APPENDIX A: HISTORY AND USE OF THE PART

Planning and performance monitoring are required by law

In 1993, the Congress found federal managers to be "disadvantaged in their efforts to improve program efficiency and effectiveness, because of insufficient articulation of program goals and inadequate information on program performance." The Government Performance and Results Act (Public Law 103-62), or GPRA, was passed to promote a focus on results by requiring federal agencies to engage in strategic planning and performance reporting.

Objectives and results of federal programs are assessed during budget formulation

The "President's Management Agenda," which includes a U.S. Government-wide initiative to improve budget and performance integration, was published in 2001. The Agenda calls for agencies to monitor program performance and to incorporate performance review into budgetary decision-making.

To support this initiative, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) instituted a new activity within the context of budget formulation. OMB uses a standard questionnaire called the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) to engage federal programs in a review of program design, strategic planning, program management, and the achievement of results that demonstrate value for the taxpayer. Through the PART process, OMB rates programs as **Effective, Moderately Effective, Adequate,** or **Ineffective**. Alternatively, OMB deems programs that are unable to provide reliable performance information (thus precluding assignment of a program rating) **Results Not Demonstrated** and recommends establishment or improvement of mechanisms for performance measurement.

OMB has found that many DOI programs lack performance information

Of the 74 DOI programs assessed between 2002 and 2007, OMB rated only 8 programs (11 percent) **Effective** and placed 16 programs (22 percent) in the category **Results Not Demonstrated**. DOI programs assessed through the PART process reflect over $9 billion dollars in annual budget authority. Approximately one quarter of this spending is associated with programs that lack reliable performance information.

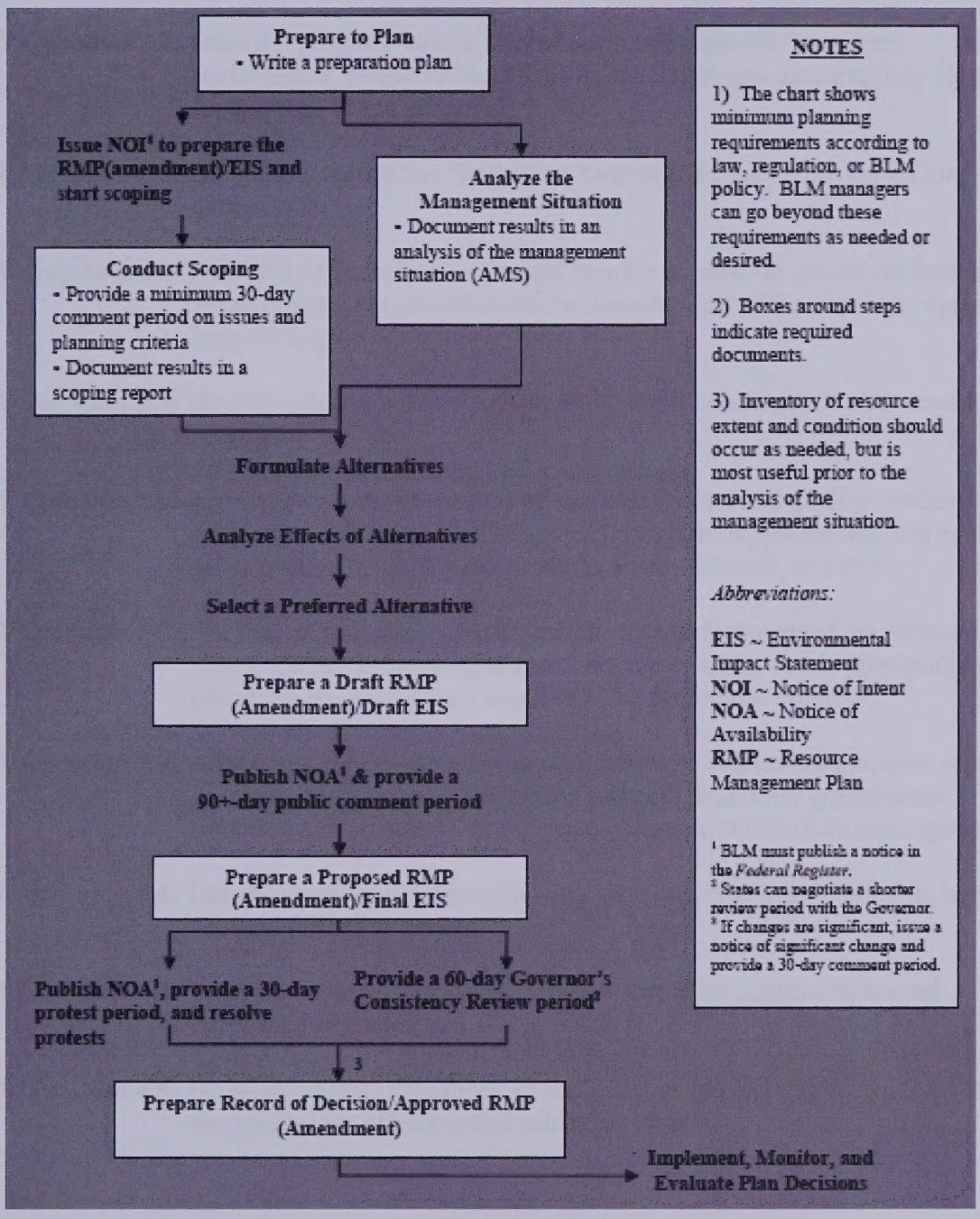
PART Ratings, 2002-2007	Number of Programs	Percent of Programs
Effective	8	11
Moderately Effective	23	32
Adequate	25	35
Ineffective	0	0
Results Not Demonstrated	16	22
TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	**72**	**100**

PART findings can be used to 1) justify termination or substantial curtailment of federal programs, 2) support legislative or fiscal enhancements, or 3) promote management improvements. OMB publishes PART results on its ExpectMore.gov Web site, together with recommended improvement actions for every program it has assessed. Agency officials and program managers are expected to follow up on these recommendations and to keep OMB, and ultimately the public, apprised of progress through updates of the information posted to ExpectMore.gov and through internal communications. OMB then reassesses programs on schedules developed in consultation with responsible agencies.

Appendix B: Bureau of Land Management, Table of Organization

Director		
Headquarters Offices		
National Landscape Conservation System	Fire and Aviation Policy	Law Enforcement and Security
Renewable Resources and Planning **Division of Planning and Science Policy**	Minerals, Realty, and Resource Protection	Information Resources Management
Communication	Human Capital Management	Business and Fiscal Resources
State Offices		
Alaska	Arizona	California
Colorado	Idaho	Montana
Nevada	New Mexico	Oregon
Utah	Wyoming	Eastern States

APPENDIX C: BLM RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS
— REQUIRED STEPS FOR NEW PLANS, REVISIONS, AND AMENDMENTS —


Prepare to Plan
• Write a preparation plan
Issue NOI[1] to prepare the RMP(amendment)/EIS and start scoping
Conduct Scoping
• Provide a minimum 30-day comment period on issues and planning criteria
• Document results in a scoping report
Analyze the Management Situation
• Document results in an analysis of the management situation (AMS)
Formulate Alternatives
Analyze Effects of Alternatives
Select a Preferred Alternative
Prepare a Draft RMP (Amendment)/Draft EIS
Publish NOA[1] & provide a 90+-day public comment period
Prepare a Proposed RMP (Amendment)/Final EIS
Publish NOA[1], provide a 30-day protest period, and resolve protests
Provide a 60-day Governor's Consistency Review period[2]
3
Prepare Record of Decision/Approved RMP (Amendment)
Implement, Monitor, and Evaluate Plan Decisions
NOTES
1) The chart shows minimum planning requirements according to law, regulation, or BLM policy. BLM managers can go beyond these requirements as needed or desired.
2) Boxes around steps indicate required documents.
3) Inventory of resource extent and condition should occur as needed, but is most useful prior to the analysis of the management situation.
Abbreviations:
EIS ~ Environmental Impact Statement
NOI ~ Notice of Intent
NOA ~ Notice of Availability
RMP ~ Resource Management Plan
[1] BLM must publish a notice in the Federal Register.
[2] States can negotiate a shorter review period with the Governor.
[3] If changes are significant, issue a notice of significant change and provide a 30-day comment period.

Source: BLM *Land Use Planning Handbook*

Appendix D: PART Questions That Elicited a NO Answer

Performance Measures

PART Question 2.1: Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program?

PART Question 2.2: Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures?

PART Question 2.3: Does the program have a limited number of specific annual performance measures that can demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's long-term goals?

PART Question 2.4: Does the program have baselines and ambitious targets for its annual measures?

PART Question 2.6: Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?

PART Question 2.7: Are budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget?

PART Question 3.2: Are Federal managers and program partner's (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) held accountable for costs, schedule and performance results?

PART Question 4.1: Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals?

PART Question 4.2: Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals?

PART Question 4.5: Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?

Efficiency Measures

PART Question 3.4: Does the program have procedures (e.g. competitive sourcing/cost comparisons, IT improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution?

PART Question 4.3: Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?

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